

## **Aighton, Bailey & Chaigley Parish Council**

### **Planning Application 3/2021/1118 - Punch Bowl Inn, Longridge Road, Hurst Green - Change of use of land to form a 15-pitch static holiday caravan park**

The Parish Council strongly object to this application and believe it should be refused on planning grounds.

The Parish Council has been consistent in opposing a development of this scale on this site, having opposed applications 3/2016/0056, 3/2017/0294, 3/2017/0607 and 3/2018/0362. The latter, which included the conversion of the existing Punch Bowl Inn to holiday lets, was, however, approved by Ribble Valley Borough Council. The principal reasons for objection were, and remain, over-development of the site and on grounds of highway safety.

We feel it pertinent to also register the sense of dismay and outrage felt by our parishioners and our council at the demolition of the Punch Bowl as a grade two listed building. Although this may be irrelevant in planning terms it is none the less a live issue affecting the views of the public on this planning application.

We note that the supporting statement for this current application from the applicant's planning consultants makes much of the fact that the remaining parts of the successful application 3/2018/0362 for the 15 caravans is exactly the same and so should be treated in the same way as in 2018. However, there are significant material differences. The most notable is that the site is no longer screened by the Punch Bowl buildings and this significantly affects both the visual amenity and the highways access. We therefore believe that the current application should be assessed entirely on its own merits and without reference to the former Punch Bowl Inn. The applicant cannot have it both ways, both depending on the former use as a public house and restaurant which now no longer exists to maintain that it is safe on highways grounds, and yet not including the site of the demolished inn in the current application.

#### **Highways**

Given that the current site is now entirely separate from the former Punch Bowl Inn, reference to its use by vehicles in former years is irrelevant. An access and egress at any similar point on this road would immediately be turned down on highways grounds. The access and egress from the site does not have sufficient sightlines to the east, being very close to a very dangerous bend and bad junction. This is the case with or without the existing building.

We refer to a similar application for holiday accommodation outside the village of Hurst Green: 3/2018/0685 on land close to Reed Deep. This was refused, and an appeal against the decision was dismissed on 12/11/2019. The Inspector for that appeal noted that there were insufficient sightlines, and that adequate sightlines could not be obtained, even had the applicant permission to remove hedges from land he did not own. The situation is the same here.

We note that the applicant's supporting Highway Report refers to accident figures for the most recent five years. As the Punch Bowl site has not been in use for upwards of ten years, these are meaningless. We also note that the applicant's Highways Report makes much of the unlawful demolition of the Punch Bowl giving greater visibility to the right, from the very dangerous 30m to 60m. However, the Inspector's report on 3/2018/0685 reiterates the LCC Highway statement that a visibility of 120m would be required. The traffic volume along the B6243 is very similar either side of Hurst Green, and, therefore, the visibility from the egress from the applicant's site barely reaches half that required by LCC Highways.

Further we feel that as a caravan park, users would be likely to be families enjoying a rural holiday. Crossing the B6243 to gain access to the public footpath toward Bailey House or to use the pavement, as there is none on the Punchbowl side of the road, would be extremely dangerous. It should also be noted that the pavement is extremely narrow and would struggle to accommodate a buggy or pram. In fact, the school bus dropping children off for Bailey House does not stop at this point but takes the children further along the road where it is safer to cross the road.

### **Visual Amenity**

As stated previously, the 15-pitch caravan park is not the same as in the previous application. It is no longer screened by the Punch Bowl buildings. It is, therefore, much more obtrusive in the landscape. The applicant can no longer piggy-back a holiday park on the back of an existing hospitality venue: it no longer exists.

Again, the siting and nature of the location are very similar to the application near Reed Deep, 3/2018/0685. In particular, the Inspector in his appeal decision noted that 'it would appear detached' from the village of Hurst Green: this would be even more so. He also noted that the character of the landscape either side of the B6243, which forms the boundary of the Forest of Bowland AONB at this point, was the same and that, therefore, it would have a direct impact on the visual amenity of the AONB: the same is true here. He also noted the detrimental visual impact on drivers and walkers: this would be even more pronounced at this site, especially since the demolition of the buildings fronting the road.

The applicant's own supporting statement refers to Paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The site is bordered towards the rear with ancient woodland. Given that, as with the site near Reed Deep, the application site has a direct impact on the AONB, it is our belief that the density and design of the static caravans neither conserve nor enhance the landscape and scenic beauty.

Again, the applicant's own supporting statement refers to Paragraph 130 of the NPPF, which encourages good design by stipulating that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, and be visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. Further, paragraph 6.6 of the applicant's own supporting statement states in

relation to RVBC's Core Strategy that Key Statement EN2 'Landscape' says: "The landscape and character of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be protected, conserved and enhanced. Any development will need to contribute to the conservation of the natural beauty of the area. As a principle the Council will expect development to be in keeping with the character of the landscape, reflecting local distinctiveness, vernacular style, scale, style, features and building materials." The Parish Council do not believe that the proposed static caravans meet these requirements, having no regard to local vernacular style or good architecture, and being densely packed with little green space or amenity.

### **Conclusion**

Taking this as a new application on its own merits and entirely separate from 3/2018/0362, the Parish Council believe that it should be refused on highways grounds, as it completely fails to meet adequate safety standards, on density, and on visual impact on the AONB and surrounding area.